

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Brookings teacher named SD Guard Lieutenant of the Year

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The South Dakota National Guard announced a Brookings teacher as the 2015 recipient of the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award, naming him the SDNG's Lieutenant of the Year.

First Lt. Kale Skogen, of White, who currently serves as the assistant operations officer in the Headquarters Company of the 153rd Engineer Battalion in Huron, was selected as the most exceptional lieutenant after competing against lieutenants from each of the SDNG's major commands.

The award was presented by the National Guard Association of South Dakota at its annual officers' conference in Huron, April 18.

"It was a great honor for me to be able to represent my battalion and brigade well," Skogen said. "I feel privileged to have been chosen among such tough competition and quality lieutenants that we have across the state."

Skogen, who has been a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard for nine years, first enlisted as a carpentry and masonry specialist in the 155th Engineer Company. While attending college at South Dakota State University, he enrolled in the ROTC program and commissioned in May 2011.

He served as a platoon leader (2011-2012) and an executive officer (2012-2014) in the 211th Engineer Company before moving into his current position.

"First Lt. Skogen always performs his duties and accomplishes all assigned missions with the utmost professionalism," said Col. Terry Ommen, commander of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. "His accomplishments and dedication to duty over the past year have definitely earned him the distinction of being recognized as the South Dakota National Guard's most outstanding lieutenant of the year."

In addition to his responsibilities in the National Guard, Skogen instructs at Brookings High School, where he teaches students the various aspects of residential construction and woodworking skills. Throughout the year, he also operates New Horizons Construction, a construction company and snow removal business.

"I'm thankful for everything the South Dakota National Guard has done for me - in shaping my character and leadership," Skogen said. "Hopefully those characteristics have in turn benefited my community as well."

Skogen has volunteered on the Fire Department of White for the past three years and is a large advocate of the Habitat for Humanity Program within the Brookings area, said Ommen.

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“He has donated over 300 hours of community service to assist on two separate Habitat for Humanity projects and utilizes his skills whenever possible to benefit his community,” Ommen said.

The Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award was established in 1968 to annually recognize the most outstanding lieutenant in the South Dakota National Guard. Selection is based on exceptional qualities of leadership, values and performance.

Other officers representing their major command for this year’s award competition were 1st Lt. Edna Knutson, 109th Regional Support Group; 1st Lt. Adam Punt, 114th Fighter Wing, and 1st Lt. Justin Warfel, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute).

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



150418-Z-FO377-030: The South Dakota National Guard presented 1st Lt. Kale Skogen, center, of White, S.D., with 2015 Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award, naming him the SDNG’s Lieutenant of the Year. Skogen, who currently serves as the assistant operations officer in the Headquarters Company of the 153rd Engineer Battalion in Huron, was selected as the most exceptional lieutenant after competing against lieutenants from each of the SDNG’s major commands. On hand to present the award were Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG’s adjutant general, and Lt. Col. Steven Siemonsma, president of the National Guard Association of South Dakota. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Chad Carlson/Released)

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